States and Union Territories with the co-operation of nationalised, commercial banks and Regional Rural Banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof since the last three financial years, banks, and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Increase in banking strikes

624. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that banking strikes have become a common feature in India these days;

(b) if so, the details of the bank strikes in the country during the last one year;

(c) the details of the loss suffered by the public as a result thereof; and

(d) how far the demands of the bank employees have been accepted to avoid such strikes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) In the past one year, strike calls were given by various unions/associations. First, majority of the State Bank of India employees went on strike from 3.04.2006 to 9.04.2006. Thereafter, there was one day strike each on 28.07.2006 and 27.10.2006, by all bank employees, in support of their demands.

(c) It is not possible to quantify the losses suffered due to strike.

(d) The negotiations were held by the Chief Labour Comissioner (Central) from time to time in this regard. However, the issues could not be resolved to the satisfaction of employees.

Loans disbursed to priority and non-priority sectors

625. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount of loans disbursed to priority and non-priority sectors at the end of March, 2006;

(b) the details of non-priority sector loan disbursement; and

(c) the reasons for disbursing more loan to non-priority sector than the priority sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) As reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the outstanding amount of loans to priority and non-priority sectors by the scheduled commerical banks as at the end of March, 2006 is as under:

(Rs. in crores)

Priority Sector Advances	547394
Non-Priority Sector Advances	1003985

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Increase in external debt payments

626. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's external debt payments are shooting up and continue to be among top ten debtor in the world despite country's higher build up in foreign exchange reserves during five years of previous Government's regime;

(b) whether it is a fact that required payments will double in the next five years to $13.94 billion in 2010-11 from the current level $7.4 billion in 2006-07;

(c) if so, the reasons for this rising trend during 2005-06 as compared to previous fiscal; and

(d) what remedial steps Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) India's external debt service payments rose from US$ 9.16 billion in 2004-05 to US$ 18.97 billion in 2005-06. According to the World Bank's Global Development Finance, 2006, India's debt service ratio (proportion of total debt service payments to external current receipts) was 6 per cent in 2004 and ranked as the second lowest among the top ten debtor countries.